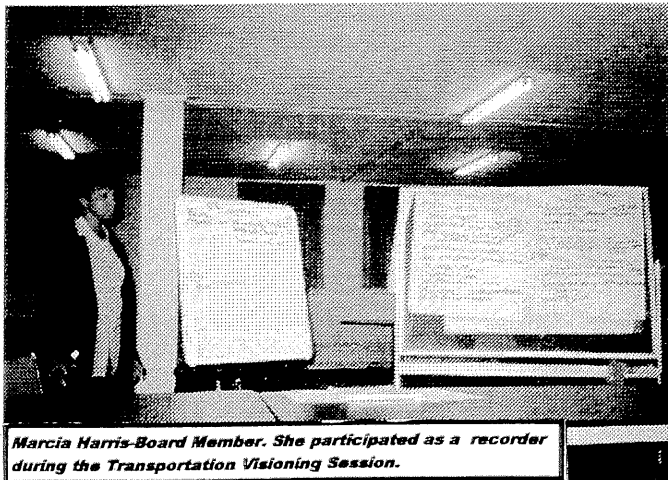




*Visioning Session I. Sylvia McClain and Robert Franko were the recorder and facilitator.*



*Visioning Session II. Sheila Malone presented the Board Members and gave a CRS-Overview.*



*Marcia Harris-Board Member. She participated as a recorder during the Transportation Visioning Session.*

Photos by E. R. L. Khoapa

## IV.

# COMMUNITY VISIONING AND GOAL SETTING

## IV. COMMUNITY VISIONING AND GOAL SETTING

Visioning and goal setting are how citizens can provide leadership and create livable communities for today and the future. This focuses on solving existing communal problems, identifying solutions and alternatives through consensus-building. The visioning process provides the community with tools to affect incremental change and the ability to evaluate their recommendations through prioritization.

The visioning sessions were held September 18<sup>th</sup> and September 25<sup>th</sup> 1997. Three area topics were discussed in each session and all comments, inquiries were first recorded, prioritized and finally summarized on flip charts.

### A. APPROACH

*"How do we strengthen what is good in our community, per chance improve upon it? ...."* was the guiding principle during the visioning sessions. A video presentation titled "A Vision For the Future of Our Community"<sup>18</sup> was viewed by all participants. This gave participants something to react to and facilitated a question and answer period as to the objective and expected outcome of the sessions. That is, the prioritization of three recommendations for the cluster per topic area. In addressing cluster-specific issues, the utilization of summarized reports from the Focus Group Sessions covering each major topic area; commercial, residential, job centers, transportation, quality of life, youth development, recreation and environment; general comments and observations and building condition surveys were revisited. Board members and all community stakeholders in attendance were further provided with a visioning process handout. The components contained therein were:

- ⇒ Asking the question ... What if?. This serves as an act of the imagination. Looking to the future and describing what the community wants to see, where, how and how much?
- ⇒ Interpretation of cluster 7, the City of Detroit and national trends in the revitalization process and building livable communities. Understanding the needs of the cluster within the global context thus looking at social, economical and political issues in relation to all area topics and the city as a whole.

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<sup>18</sup> The video was " by the Planning Commissions of the City and County of Hillsborough County, Tampa, Florida.

⇒ Reality Check - leaving room for the unexpected.

## B. RESULTS

The results of the visioning sessions brought forth issues some felt could be implemented within 1 to 5 years (short-term) and those that would take 5 to 10 years (long-term). Almost all enforcement, code regulations, maintenance and community initiated programs were assigned to the short-term category. All programmatic and capital improvement based goals and objectives were assigned to the long-term category.

The goals set by the community became the catalyst for the prioritization of the reinvestment recommendations. These are presented in the next section.

### 1. Neighborhood Commercial

Based on the revision of the Asset Profile document/maps and Focus Group-Summary Reports, stakeholders confirmed the findings and concluded the following:

- Cluster- commercial should be more responsive to their needs, taste and allow for comparison shopping.
- Greater security and personal protection for both commercial establishments and residents while providing much needed clean-parking.
- Reduce over-represented establishments like beeper/liquor and auto service stores through the limitation of licenses for such entities.
- Increase the number of current and future commercial developments that will be aesthetically pleasing and offer employment opportunities to the youth within the cluster.
- Clean-up or acquire unattractive commercial strips along Joy, Greenfield, Plymouth, Grand River and Schaefer.
- Increase the number of ethnically diverse sit-down restaurants. It was noted that even though the cluster had some ethnic restaurants, they were not evenly distributed cluster-wide. A suggestion for more African-American operated restaurants on the north-western section and south-eastern sections on Joy Road was noted.

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**Community Reinvestment Strategy**

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- Create alternative mix-use and adaptive-reuse developments in areas where large-scale commercial developments are no longer viable. Suggested areas were Plymouth, Greenfield and Joy.

## 2. Housing

Maintaining the good housing stock in the cluster and increasing home-ownership was the most cited suggestion. Stakeholders felt that reduction in neighborhood improvement funds has proved to be devastating to most home owners, especially those within the low-moderate income bracket. Much needed improvements and repairs have not been maintained.

Stakeholders further commented that high property taxes and the lack of ordinance enforcement (i.e. building codes, trash dumping and abandoned cars), title searches, and purchasing city properties were consistent barriers to home ownership.

The group stated that the high traffic volumes and fast speeding traffic in residential areas needed to be addressed by both residents and city officials. Even though most felt that citizens could be utilized to monitor such infractions, some were not in favor of citizens monitoring each other. The feeling was that the validity of citations could be suspect due to overzealousness of some individuals. Therefore, strategies such as traffic calming were to be considered as one of the recommendations.

Overall, the stakeholders felt it was important to focus infill and rehabilitation redevelopment efforts in areas with a high percentage of renters as opposed to homeowners, if housing stock and neighborhoods are to be maintained.

## 3. Job Centers

The cluster has three major job centers, Crossroads Retail Center, Chrysler Corporation and Detroit Diesel. However, numerous issues of concern to job center creation in Cluster 7 were restated as follows:

- Lack of suitable space for administrative/service opportunities.
- Limited number of schools or employers offering vocational/technical training.
- Limited number of job placement and training cluster-wide.

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**Community Reinvestment Strategy**

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- Lack of more personalized employment centers and job readiness programs.
- Lack of information sharing or dissemination regarding all programs city and cluster-wide.

Over five excellent sites were proposed by the residents as potential sites to locate job centers. The greatest influence to the proposed locations was proximity to both city services and public transportation. Therefore, the majority of these sites are located along major roads within the cluster, thereby, strengthening the symbiotic relationship between job centers and accessibility to transportation.

The sites were: Plymouth/Southfield Fwy, Plymouth between W. Outer Drive and W. Parks, Greenfield/Joy Road - located opposite the FIA Office, Schoolcraft/Schaefer Highway, Tireman/Wyoming.

#### 4. Transportation

Accessibility, service delivery and routing of the existing public transportation was given a fair rating by the stakeholders. However, the need for a more efficient public transportation system, issues of scheduling, were a great concern. With over 90% of the residents working and shopping outside the cluster and city, the increased volume in traffic increases congestion, road wear and tear, and air-pollution.

The roads with the poorest conditions are Grand River, Greenfield, Plymouth, portions of Southfield Freeway, and Joy.

Limiting truck traffic in residential areas and increasing traffic calming strategies in most residential and commercial areas was strongly suggested by the participants.

#### 5. Youth Development

There is distinct lack of information sharing and dissemination regarding programs and opportunities available in the cluster and city. Therefore, evaluation of existing programs was a challenge. Nevertheless, stakeholders felt that Job Training Placement Programs, Trade Schools and School to Work Programs ranked high in terms of desirability by local youth. Most members still stated the great need to have more "job readiness" programs and "life-skill training", health and nutrition, math/science skill training and employment opportunities within the cluster. The consensus was to focus on establishing or increasing access to the following:

**Community Reinvestment Strategy**

- ⇒ Apprenticeship programs in commerce, engineering, etc.
- ⇒ Establish a "One stop center" for Job Placement/Training
- ⇒ Publication or citizen awareness of all these available programs. This impacts access for most youth and residents. (Resource Guides or Hotlines)
- ⇒ Extension of school operation-hours to facilitate tutoring, after school extra-curricula activities

**Recreational facilities and programs**

Consensus was that under-utilization of existing facilities due to lack of maintenance of the numerous parks in the cluster, and lack of security impacted the community negatively. Maintenance of community parks and centers were recommended as vehicles to engage the community at large to also preserve the environment and greenspaces.

**6. Environment**

Environmental issues that impact the cluster ranged from junk car lots, muddy and unkempt recycling facilities, auto-service lots, abandoned cars and vacant/abandoned gas stations.

Overwhelmingly, stakeholders expressed the need for enforcement of environmental laws in the cluster and throughout Wayne County. Finally, addition of educational programs and workshops exposing the public and the youth to environmental issues such as illegal dumping, beautification and wild-life/plant programs was suggested as a vehicle to sensitize all to this topic.